STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0023

PAUL R. LEPAGE

GOVERNOR

James E. Rier, Jr.

ACTING COMMISSIONER

EXHIBIT: #VII.B.

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: James E. Rier, Jr., Commissioner*

DATE: August 12, 2014

SUBJECT: Request from the Department of Education for Proposing a Joint Basic School
            Approval Rule for the Public Preschool Programs to Reflect Quality Standards of
            Program Practice

BACKGROUND: The State Board is responsible for Joint rules on Basic School Approval with
the Maine Department of Education. The Department of Education convened a workgroup of
early childhood professionals in 2007 to develop recommended quality standards of program
practice after a careful review of current research at that time. These Recommended Quality
Standards of Program Practice have been posted on the Department's Public Preschool web page
since that time. Seven years have passed and there has been significant focus and research across
the country on the importance of quality early childhood experiences on young children's
developing brains and the sustained positive outcomes as these children enter the k-12 system.
The Department reconvened a representative grouping of early childhood professionals,
comparable to the prior workgroup, to review the Recommended Standards in their current form
and to make recommendations for further refinement based on the newest research. The
Department has drafted proposed regulations that would serve as the basic elements of public
preschool programs in order to be an approved program for receipt of Essential Programs and
Services subsidy. These regulations would ensure a consistent standard throughout the state.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the State Board of Education consider initiating
rulemaking to make the proposed amendments above to Chapter 124 in accordance with the
Maine Administrative Procedures Act.

*Prepared by Jaci Holmes, Federal State Legislative Liaison